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B. C. Booker

Bernard C. Becher

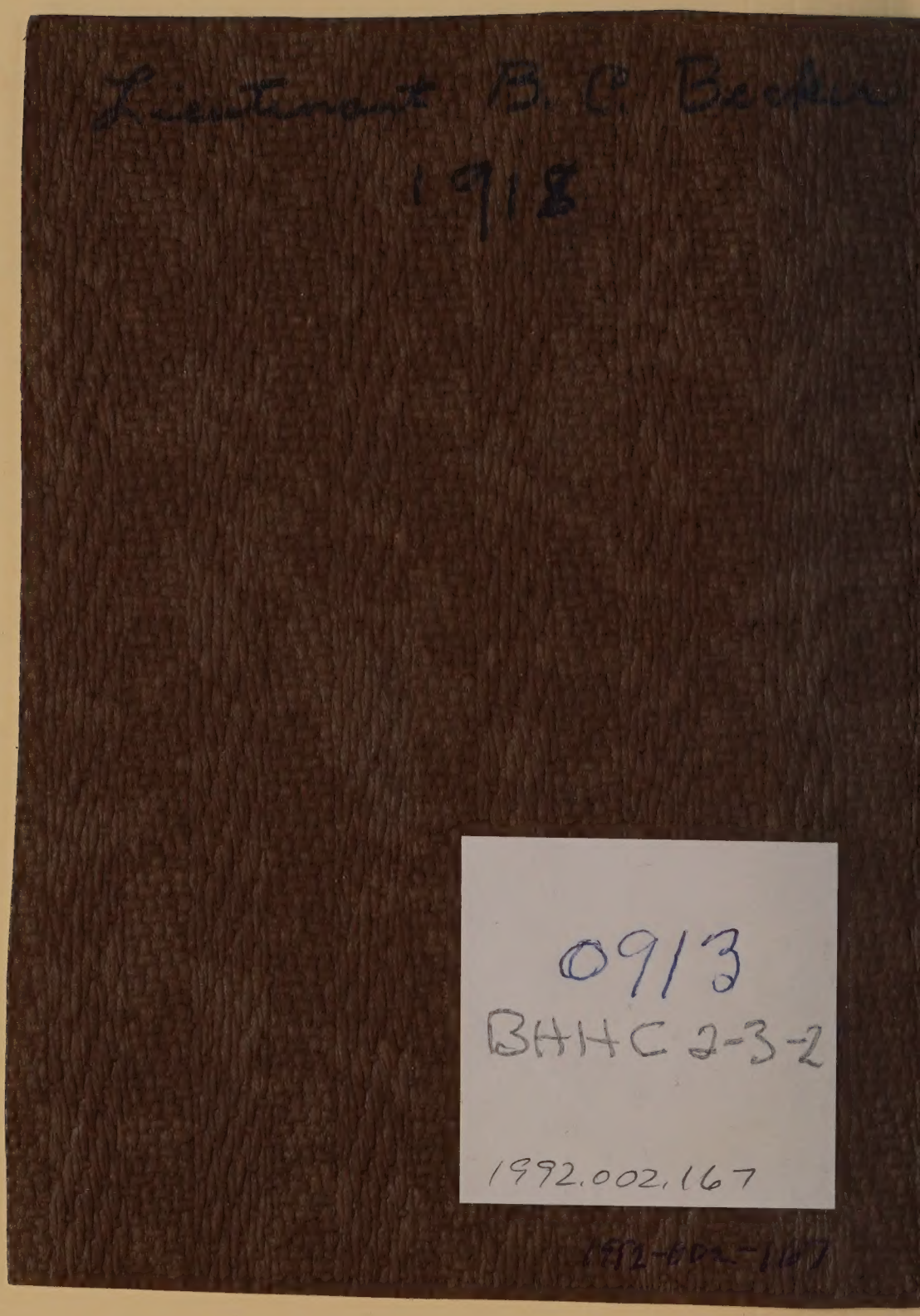
Student at Northwestern

Academy & Army & Navy -

1908 - 1912

BHHC 2-32

RHHC 3-85


Lieutenant B. C. Becker
1918
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BERNARD CARL BECKER

BORN -- December 18, 1893 in Belen,New Mexico

FATHER -- John Becker - May 28, 1850 - April 21, 1932. He was born in the Province of Hanover, Germany, and arrived in New Mexico in 1869. He died in Belen.

MOTHER -- Anna Vielstitch - July 26, 1851 - December 4, 1922. She was born in Lesum near Bremen, Germany, and came to this country with her four sisters, where they settled near relatives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Anna and John were married in Santa Fe, New Mex. on November 2, 1877. They went to live in Belen, where she was the first white woman to come to live in the Rio Grande Valley. She and her husband are both buried in the Belen Cemetary.

CHILDREN -John and Anna were the parents of 6 children: John, Jr. (Hans), Louis Carl, Anna, Gustav, Lucie, and Bernard Christian,(later changed to Carl), nicknamed "Ben," the youngest of the 6 Beckers, and the only living member of John's and Anna's children.

RELIGION -All of the Becker children were raised in the Lutheran Faith. When Ben and his wife, Cornelia, moved to San Diego, they became members of the Kensington Community Church in 1948.

SCHOOLING-Ben first attended Grade School in Belen. When he became old enough for High School, since there were no Secondary Schools in Belen at that time, his parents sent him to Northwest ERN Military and Naval Academy, Lake

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Geneva, Wisconsin, where he would be near relatives. He attended Northwestern for 4 years, 1908-1912. After completing his studies at Northwestern, he entered Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and studied there from 1912-1916., graduating in 1916 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree, his Major, Business Administration. At college, he joined the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity, where he made many staunch, lifelong friends. One year he was a member of the Interfraternity Council. He was one of the official photographers for the College Annual, The Nugget; he took leading parts in both the Junior and Senior plays; enjoyed wrestling, and being active in college affairs generally. He never lost an opportunity to go hiking over the mountains, one year climbing to the top of Pike's Peak. Ben was an all-round student, popular with all.

WORLD WAR II SERVICE -- In 1917, Ben enlisted as a Sergeant in the Infantry, and spent the following year at a number of Training Camps: Fort Oglethorpe, Ga.; Camp lee, Va.; Camp Pendleton, Va.; Fort Upton, N.Y.

On July 6, 1918, Ben was discharged from the Service as Second Lieutenant. His great disappointment was not realizing his ambition to be sent to France where he would see active service, but Fate seemed to be against him the 3 times he was slated to lead his men overseas, when orders were canceled at the last minute.

On June 1, 1919, he was appointed as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry in the Officers' Reserve Corps of the Army of the United States. Among other things, his Citation read: "Character--Excellent; Honest and

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faithful."

MARRIAGE: --On March 4, 1920, Ben was married in Belen to Miss Cornelia (Connie) Bludworth, a native of Mississippi. After honeymooning in El Paso, the young couple returned to Belen where they set up housekeeping. At that time Ben was working with his Father and brothers in their Mercantile business, and continued in this business for the next 7 years.

For over 50 years, Ben and Connie lived a happily married life until her death in San Diego, California, January 10, 1971.

CHILDREN: --Three children-2 daughters and one son, were born to Ben and Connie while they were living in Belen. These children are:

(1) - Marjorie Elizabeth , now Mrs. William S. Appel, who with her husband, make their home in Kent, Wash. Col. Appel is a pilot with Hughes Airwest.

(2) Anne Lucie was first married to Captain Robert V. Lewis of the U.S.Air Force, but later was divorced. Anne's second husband is Carl C. Callahan, who is in the Real Estate business in San Diego, where they make their home.

(3) The only son, Bernard W. Becker, known as Barney, was seriously wounded on D-Day, World War II, in a parachute jump into Holland. He received many decorations, including the Purple Heart, for his bravery. He died some 7/4 years later in San Diego, where he was living with his parents.

GRANDCHILDREN: The 2 daughters of Marjorie and Bill Appel: -

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Elizabeth, who lives in Bellevue, Washington;
Barbara, who was married to Thomas Mildner on June 29, 1978. They live in Kirkland, Wash.
Both girls graduated from the Washington State University at Pullman.

The 3 daughters of Anne and Robert V. Lewis:
Janet Ryan (Mrs. George);
Judith McCoy (Mrs. Charles);
Joan Adams (Mrs. Daryl Adams).
They live in San Diego, California.

GREAT GRANDCHILDREN: Ben has 4 Greats:

Cheryl McCoy, daughter of Judith and Charles;
Michael McCoy, son of Judith and Charles;
Scott Jones, son of Joan and her first husband, Charles Jones.
Troy Adams, son of Joan and Daryl Adams.

BUSINESS CAREER: After returning to Belen following his war service, Ben worked in his father's mercantile business for 7 years.
In 1927, he and his family left Belen, and headed for the Pacific North West to seek new adventures, along with a lower altitude.
For the next 20 years the family lived in the state of Washington. For 18 of those years, Ben was Manager of the J.C.Penney Co. store in Kent, Wash.
In 1947, Ben retired from Penney's, and took his family to live in San Diego, which has been their home ever since.

CIVIC INTERESTS: Ben has always been active in Civic Affairs.

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While in Belen, he took an active part in the Hey-Day Club, and was a member of the Masonic Lodge. He has always been interested in the Valencia Co. Historical Society, and still keeps up his membership. He was also on the Board of Belen Town and Improvement Assn. until it was dissolved in 1972. He was a member of the Board of the Becker-Dalies Co. until the store went out of business.

While living in Kent, Washington, Ben joined Kiwanis International on January 12, 1937, and served as its president one term, in 1943. This association with Kiwanis became perhaps the main activity of Ben's community service.

After moving to San Diego, he took this interest with him. He had not been associated long in San Diego, when he was instrumental in helping to organize two new Kiwanis Clubs there. In 1951, he was elected as First Lieutenant-Governor for District 21. He was especially interested in the work with youth, which was sponsored by Kiwanis. For his time and effort as a Junior Achievement Advisor "to develop in American youth a better understanding and appreciation of our private enterprise economy," Ben was awarded a special Citation. His enthusiasm for Kiwanis and its goals has always been keen during his now 42 years of membership.

Ben also received a Certificate of Award, signed

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by Harry Truman, then President of the U.S., among other signatures, "in sincere appreciation" for his"voluntary contribution of time and efforts to the Price Control Program" in his community.

Ben has been for a long time a member of the San Diego Historical Society, and presented his slides taken of some of the old houses in San Diego for use in the Villa Montezuma House and Museum.

He is a member of the San Diego Zoological Society.

HOBBIES: - Perhaps the keenest interest all of his life has been anything pertaining to Science. His favorite magazine is Popular Science, which he reads from cover to cover. His favorite scientist is J. Bronowski, whose TV programs, while he was living, Ben would always listen to, as well as reading Bronowski's books.

Flying his own plane for 5 years was one of his hobbies. He made a study of Navigation, and had many enjoyable hours working on his plane.

Ben was also mechanically minded, and doing carpentry work on his two workbences, one in the basement, the other in the garage of his home. He liked nothing quite so much as fixing things around his homem and installing electric lighting, etc. He was a real "Mr. Fixit."

Gardening was another hobby. He prided himself that his front lawn never had a weed among the Dichondra.

The trophies for his prowess at Golf, which are in

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his den at home gives silent proof of successes in that game, which he thoroly enjoyed until a few years ago when his vision began playing tricks so that he feared he wouldn't be able to see the ball! It was indeed a great disappointment to Ben when he had to give up his golf.

Of all of Ben's many interests, perhaps the one he valued most, and certainly enjoyed most, was in the number of staunch, loyal friends he gathered around him throughout his entire life.

His many albums of pictures of the good times he had had with his friends, and the collections of news items he kept of what pertained to some incident in the lives of his friends, attest to his abiding interest in his friends, and the memories of good times he had enjoyed with them.

In the newsletter he wrote about his activities in the 50 years since his graduation from Colorado College, Ben perhaps summed up better than anyone else could have done, these words:

"I never got to be a hero, governor, or even mayor, but I have made a lot of friends, spent a lot of time in serv ice club work, and all in all I have loved it."

SECOND MARRIAGE: On October 16, 1971, in Cleveland, Ohio, Ben married a former Colorado College classmate, Mrs. Lois Smith Johnson, who had lost her husband some years before. Her home had been in Washington, D.C., where she had been with the American Red Cross. She and Ben have "lived happily ever after" their marriage, in the Becker's home, 4164 Palisades Road, San Diego, California, 92116.

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ONE MAN'S CREED

It matters not when the call may be,
Tho soon or late or quick or slow;
This much I ask, at least for me,
My flags shall fly that the world may know
Here lived a man who stood for Truth
Who hated shams in age or youth.

I question not another's dreams,
Nor raise a doubt of honesty;
I acquiesce whene'er it seems
That more feel differently from me,
Save, when it comes to right or wrong,
I yield to none, however strong.

Lord God, how much there is to do,
How short is life, how blocked the way;
Give me but strength to see it through,
To round out the work while yet I may,
That men may know here wrought a man
Who found a purpose in life's span.

Then let me fall, when work is done,
Fulfilled the mission planned for me,
As drops the oak, in storm or sun,
Cared not the place where that may be;
But let me live, without regret,
In hearts and lives that I have met.

Author Unknown

(It could have been written by Ben Becker, for it expresses his feelings about life and living.)

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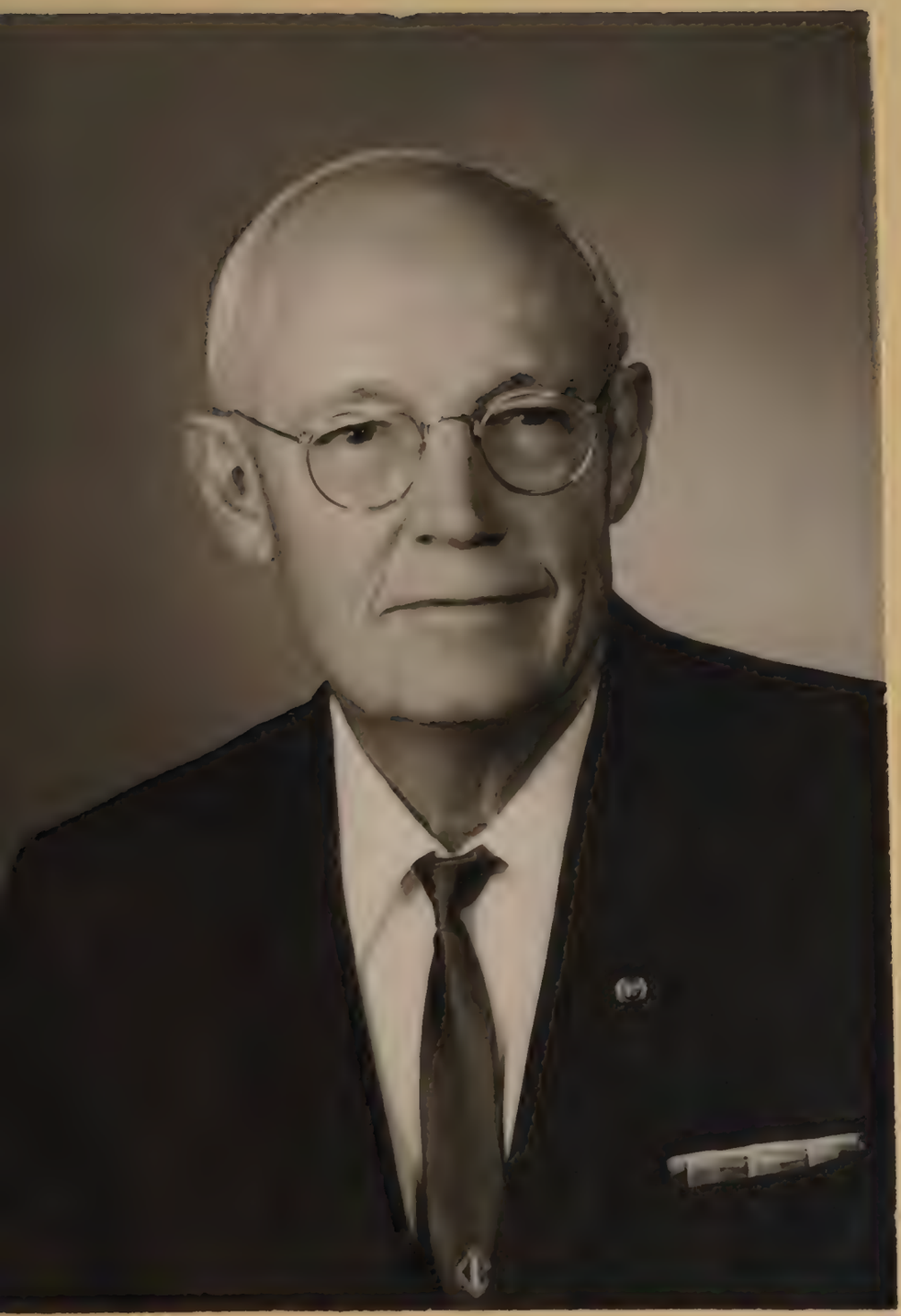

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Return to
Marion Hemingway

B C Booker
Craig 1967

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14

Camp Lee, Va.

Ben Becker

Fort Oglethorpe,
Ga -
Ben at Officers'
Training Camp
1917

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9

World War I

Ben Becker
Ready to go overseas
at Camp Upton

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BECKER, BERNARD CARL